

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 8/21/2024

TO: Grant Co. Media & Grant Co.
Healthcare Community.

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Whooping Cough: Concerning Increase in Infections in Grant County

28 people with whooping cough have been identified so far. The Community outbreak is linked to several area churches.

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health District (GCHD) staff are responding to a significant increase in whooping cough (pertussis) activity in Grant County. Since June 2024, there have been 21 people with confirmed whooping cough and 7 other people with the disease symptoms and linkage to infected individuals. Most of the infected individuals had not been vaccinated or were not up to date with the whooping cough vaccine.

Before this increase, Grant County’s last confirmed pertussis case was in 2019. A similar rise in whooping cough infections has been reported across Washington State.

Grant County Community: The whooping cough vaccine is the best protection we have against the infection. GCHD urges you to get the whooping cough vaccine if you are not up to date and stay home if you are sick.

Grant County Healthcare Providers: GCHD asks that healthcare providers consider whooping cough in any patient who shows symptoms and immediately notify GCHD of the suspected infection. Contact GCHD - (509) 766-7960.

Current Situation as of 8/21/2024:

- 22 of 28 infections can be linked to Slavic churches in Moses Lake and Soap Lake.
- 22 of 28 infections occurred in the Moses Lake area.
- At least 23 of the 28 infections occurred in people 16 years or younger.
- At least 27 of the 28 ill people were not vaccinated or not up to date on vaccinations.

It is highly likely there are more cases of whooping cough in Grant County than reported.

Immediate action has been taken to notify others who may have been in contact with these individuals. GCHD continues to work with the Slavic community to provide recommendations and information about the situation.

About Whooping Cough:

Whooping cough is a serious and highly contagious infection that can be especially dangerous for babies. It is mostly spread through coughing or sneezing. Whooping cough can often be mistaken for allergies, asthma or a cold.

Whooping Cough Symptoms:

Symptoms of whooping cough usually develop within 5 to 10 days but can present up to 3 weeks following exposure.

Early symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever
- Mild, occasional cough
- Apnea – a pause in breathing (in babies)

Late symptoms may appear after 1 to 2 weeks of the infection. These are the more traditional symptoms of whooping cough and include:

- Fits of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop"
- Vomiting during or after coughing fits
- Exhaustion after coughing fits

Exposure to Whooping Cough:

The best way to know if you have whooping cough is to talk to your doctor. If you have been exposed to whooping cough or have symptoms, call the clinic before you visit. Wear a mask and follow other clinic instructions when you go for your in-person visit.

Some people should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting sick if they have been around someone with whooping cough. Stay away from other people until you have completed the first 5 days of treatment.

Whooping Cough Vaccination:

There are two vaccines that protect against whooping cough:

- DTaP is for babies and children younger than seven years.
 - Tdap is for kids seven years and older, adolescents, and adults (including pregnant people).
 - **Pregnant people need Tdap with each pregnancy.**
 - If vaccinated as a teenager (11 or older), you do not need an additional dose as an adult unless you are pregnant.
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It's also important to wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay home whenever you're sick.

High-Risk Groups:

The whooping cough vaccine protects you and those most vulnerable to severe illness. Groups at greatest risk from whooping cough include:

- Infants under one year old
- Pregnant people (especially in the third trimester)
- People who have chronic respiratory illness

Treatment:

Whooping cough can be treated with antibiotics. It's important to start treatment as soon as possible to help from spreading the disease to others. Early treatment can also make the symptoms end sooner and be less severe.

If prescribed antibiotics for whooping cough, you should finish the prescription as directed by your doctor. Antibiotics are not recommended for the general public.

For more information:

Protect Your Family from Whooping Cough – [English](#) | [Russian](#) | [Ukrainian](#) | [Spanish](#)

Resources for Healthcare Providers:

[Washington State Department of Health report guidelines](#) | WA- DOH

[Vaccination Information for Healthcare Professionals](#) | CDC

[Specimen collection and Submission Instructions](#) | WA- DOH

[Best Practices for Healthcare Professionals on the Use of Polymerase Chain Reaction \(PCR\) for Diagnosing Pertussis](#) | CDC

[Pertussis: Key Messages for Healthcare Providers in Washington](#)

2024 GCHD Pertussis Provider Alerts:

- [Pertussis_ProviderAlert_2_21_24.pdf \(granthealth.org\)](#)
- [DOH_Pertussis_Provider_5_15_24.pdf \(granthealth.org\)](#)

